A snapshot of food intolerance in the community: prevalence, symptoms, testing and results
The foodintol® Survey 2012

In May 2012 we surveyed subscribers at foodintol® (www.foodintol.com) a website that informs and educates people about food intolerance. The survey asked our subscribers about their experiences with food intolerance, their symptoms, which methods they used to discover their intolerance - and the results of making changes to their diet. It’s important to note that not everyone answering the survey had identified a food intolerance.

There were more than 900 responses. The results are a snapshot of people with an interest in food intolerance from the USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Key findings:
• Most respondents who investigated their food intolerance were surprised by their results
• Most parents with food intolerance – also observe or suspect it in their children
• The benefits enjoyed by adjusting the diet include brighter mood, healing symptoms, fewer medications and less time off work
Q.1. Do you have food intolerance?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 26%
- Not sure: 6%

Q.2. If yes, what are you intolerant to? Tick more than one if relevant.

- Dairy: 59%
- Gluten: 58%
- Wheat: 48%
- Additives: 27%
- Fructose: 21%
- Yeast: 19%
- Nightshades: 8%
- Other: 22%

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Q.3. Did your food intolerance turn out to be the one you suspected?

- Yes: 41%
- Yes, but there was another: 42%
- No: 17%

Q.4 How did you find out you had a food intolerance? Tick more than one if relevant.

- Avoided food, felt better: 58%
- Dietician diagnosis: 7%
- Doctor diagnosis: 30%
- Journal Method: 41%
- Naturopath, alt. therapist: 24%
- Still unsure: 9%
Q. 5. Please tick any symptoms you have experienced.

- Bloating: 85%
- IBS, diarrhea, constipation: 83%
- Drowsiness: 54%
- Aches, back pain, stiff joints: 52%
- Headaches: 50%
- Weight gain: 44%
- Skin problems: 43%
- Food cravings: 40%
- Respiratory problems: 27%
- Candida (thrush): 26%
- Weight loss: 9%

Q. 6. How long did you have symptoms before you decided to check for food intolerance?

- 1 year: 15%
- 2 - 5 years: 28%
- More than 5 years: 42%
- Haven't checked: 15%
Q. 7. Please tick any clinical or naturopathy tests you have undergone to check for food intolerance.

- Blood tests: 61%
- Endoscopy or colonoscopy: 38%
- Allergy - skin scratch method: 31%
- Stool (fecal) analysis: 24%
- Examination of eyes, skin, pulses: 21%
- Gastroscopy: 18%
- Hydrogen breath testing: 15%
- Intestinal biopsy: 11%
- Other: 23%

Q. 8. Have you used a food diary (journal) to track your symptoms?

- Yes: 51%
- No: 49%

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Q. 9. Did this help in determining your food intolerance?

- Yes: 68%
- No: 16%
- Not sure: 16%

Q. 10. Tick any symptoms that were improved by finding your food intolerance.

- Bloating better: 79%
- Diarrhea better: 70%
- Less headache, migraine: 41%
- Less joint pain: 36%
- Better skin: 34%
- Fewer colds: 26%
- Less thrush: 17%
- Mouth ulcers stopped: 13%
- Menstruation better: 10%
Q. 11 What other benefits have you had from identifying your food intolerance? Tick as many as needed.

- Less time off: 20%
- Lower medical expenses: 30%
- Less back pain: 16%
- More joint mobility: 23%
- Less stress: 37%
- Better concentration: 40%
- Brighter mood: 50%
- Weight gain: 6%
- Weight loss: 38%
- More energy: 70%

Q. 12. Since you have identified your food intolerance and changed your diet - have you seen a change in need for medications, ointments, supplements and over-the-counter preparations?

- No more meds needed: 12%
- Meds decreased: 36%
- I was not using meds: 36%
- Not sure: 16%

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Q. 13. If you haven't done anything about your food intolerance, what is your reason for not implementing a food/dietary plan?

- No time: 10%
- I don't want to give up a food: 9%
- Not sure which intolerance I have: 43%
- Too hard: 15%
- Other: 23%

Q. 14. If you have children - do they have food intolerance?

- Yes: 21%
- I don't have children: 31%
- I suspect they do: 27%
- No - or no sign of it: 21%
- I don't have children: 27%
Q. 15 Do any other members of your family have food intolerance? Tick more than one if relevant.

- No, or I don't know about it: 52%
- Yes, other family member: 18%
- Yes, sister or brother: 21%
- Yes, mother or father: 26%

Q. 16. Demographics: Are you male or female?

- I am female: 89%
- I am male: 11%
Q. 17. Your age group

- 18 - 35: 25%
- 36 - 49: 35%
- 50 - 65: 34%
- 66+: 6%

Q. 18. I live in:

- USA: 36%
- Canada: 12%
- Australia: 35%
- UK: 8%
- NZ: 2%
- Other: 7%

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